

**FINAL**  
**COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PLAN**  
**LUSHER STREET GROUND WATER CONTAMINATION SITE**  
**ELKHART, INDIANA**

**Prepared for**

**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 5**  
**Community Involvement Section, Superfund Division**  
**77 West Jackson Boulevard**  
**Chicago, Illinois 60604**

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This community involvement plan (CIP) was prepared as required under the federal Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), also referred to as Superfund. The Superfund program provides funding and technical assistance to investigate and clean up hazardous waste sites that pose a risk to public health or the environment. The Superfund program encourages active dialogue between communities affected by the release of hazardous substances and the agencies responsible for carrying out or overseeing remedial actions.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency considers community involvement to be an important part of the Superfund program. EPA conducts community involvement activities to:

- Encourage open lines of communication between residents and EPA as well as with local and state government officials;
- Inform communities about the Superfund program, site-specific studies, and the progress of site activities; and
- Involve the public in decision-making processes.

As part of its community involvement efforts, EPA conducts community assessments for each Superfund site to determine the specific issues and concerns of interest to local residents. Issues and concerns are usually identified through interviews conducted with local residents, community and environmental groups, local officials, and businesses near a particular site. After conducting a community assessment, EPA prepares a CIP that contains:

- Site background information,
- Names and addresses of key community contacts,
- Site-related concerns and issues of importance to the local community, and
- Community involvement objectives and activities to address concerns and to keep residents informed throughout the cleanup process.

SulTRAC has prepared this CIP in accordance with the requirements of Contract No. EP-S5-06-02, Work Assignment No. 004-CRCR-05ZZ, which EPA assigned to SulTRAC. The scope of this work assignment was to conduct community involvement activities at the Lusher Street Ground Water Contamination Site (the Site) in Elkhart, Indiana. This CIP is based primarily on interviews conducted in September 2008 with local residents, local officials, business owners and other parties interested in activities at the Site in Elkhart, Indiana. In addition to this introduction, the CIP contains the following sections:

- **Section 2.0, Site Background** – This section provides an overview of the site’s history and operations, as well as site investigations and cleanup work.
- **Section 3.0, Community Background** – This section provides a profile of the population of Elkhart, Indiana; describes the history of community involvement in the site cleanup; and summarizes community concerns about the site.
- **Section 4.0, Community Involvement Program Objectives** – This section describes site-specific objectives developed in response to identified community concerns.
- **Section 5.0, Community Involvement Activities** – This section discusses specific activities to be conducted to accomplish the objectives identified in Section 4.0.

Appendix A of the CIP provides a timeframe for community involvement activities; Appendix B provides contact information for EPA project contacts, elected officials and the media; and Appendix C lists the location of the information repository established for the site.

## **2.0 SITE BACKGROUND**

The site contains a ground-water plume, which is an underground mass of contaminated water. The pollution in this plume, chlorinated solvents, is used in a variety of industrial applications including degreasers, plastic foam, adhesives, refrigerants, resins and fibers. Chlorinated solvents at the Site include these hazardous chemicals: 1,1,1-TCA (1,1,1-trichloroethane), TCE (trichloroethylene), 1,1-DCE (1,1-dichloroethylene) and other chlorinated compounds.

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The borders of the ground water plume have been initially established as an area bounded on the north by the St. Joseph River, on the west by State Road 19 (Nappanee Street), on the south by Hively Avenue, and on the east by Oakland Avenue (see figure on next page). (It should be noted that although the site was named “Lusher Street Ground Water Contamination Site,” Lusher Street is actually Lusher Avenue). The site area is approximately 570 acres.

In the late 1980s, Indiana’s Health Department sampled over 100 wells in the area, of which many, including private drinking water wells, were found to contain elevated levels of TCE and TCA. Subsequently, EPA installed point-of-use carbon filters in 13 residences and businesses to reduce the contamination. Water supplies of seven residences and businesses were converted to municipal water, and later municipal water lines were extended to the majority of affected properties.

In 2006, additional sampling by Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) found 12 additional wells in which contaminants exceeded drinking water levels for chlorinated solvents, and EPA also sampled vapors in residences with higher levels of ground water contamination. Residents were supplied with bottled water and point of use carbon filters for drinking water.

The State of Indiana referred the site to EPA because a long term comprehensive solution is needed to protect the drinking water wells and residences in the area. In the fall of 2007, the site was proposed for listing on the National Priorities List (NPL), and in March 2008, the listing was finalized. The NPL is a roster of the nation’s most hazardous waste sites eligible for cleanup under EPA’s Superfund program.

In order to determine the nature and extent of contamination and recommend a cleanup option, EPA will conduct a remedial investigation during which EPA will test soil and underground water supplies in an area centered around Elkhart’s Lusher Avenue. Taking samples and testing for contamination is part of an ongoing environmental investigation at the site. Sampling results



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will help EPA find out the source of the contamination, how far the contamination extends and where more testing may be needed. This investigation will be followed by a feasibility study to assess the various cleanup alternatives.

### **3.0 COMMUNITY BACKGROUND**

This section describes the compositions of the Elkhart, Ind. community, the history of community involvement with the Site, and major community concerns in Elkhart regarding the site.

#### **3.1 COMMUNITY PROFILE**

The city of Elkhart is located in Elkhart County, Indiana. It is in the north central part of the state. According to the US Census bureau, Elkhart is the 15<sup>th</sup> largest city in Indiana with an estimated population of 52,647 people. Elkhart takes its name from the area Elkhart because the island at the confluence of the Elkhart and St. Joseph Rivers is said to resemble the shape of an elk's heart.

Elkhart's industry is home to manufacturing recreational vehicles, marine equipment, musical instruments, pharmaceuticals, and manufactured housing. Elkhart is dubbed the "RV Capital of the World" because of the high concentration of RV manufacturing in the area. Elkhart also has the second largest freight classification yards in the world which are located in The Robert Young Rail Yards.

Elkhart is governed by a mayor, a common council, boards, and commissions and has a city clerk. The Elkhart Common Council is composed of nine single member wards. The community has its own police; fire; public works; streets; parks, and recreation; and administrative departments. Elkhart obtains its water from the Elkhart River and St. Joseph River.

Elkhart has a park system consisting of 24 community and neighborhood parks and a total of 35 parks and recreational facilities. The city of Elkhart is also home to seven museums including the Recreational Vehicle and Manufactured Housing Hall of Fame.

The main daily newspapers in the area are *The Elkhart Truth* and *The South Bend Tribune*. Radio and television signals are received in Elkhart with WFRN, WTRC, WLEG, and WVPE (NPR) for the main radio stations, and WBND TV, WSJV-TV (Fox 28 News), WNDU-TV, and WNIT-TV for the main television stations.

### **3.2 HISTORY OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

According to the US Census Bureau, the racial makeup of the city is approximately 71.5% white, 14.8% Hispanic or Latino, 14.7% African American, 0.4% Native American, 1.2% Asian, 0.1% Pacific Islanders, with 2.9% of the population reporting two or more races.

The City of Elkhart built an Environmental Center on Lusher Ave. in 1991. The Environmental Center is the previous site of Lusher Avenue city dump during the time period of 1959 to 1972.

### **3.3 COMMUNITY CONCERNS**

Most residents interviewed were familiar with the site and believe it started in the late 1980s. Because the area has four different Superfund sites, many thought EPA was coming to talk about a different site, such as Conrail or Himco. County and city officials stated that they have not received many concerns from residents about the site area. Other issues such as noise from a metal shredder and a recycling plant fire were of concern to the local residents. Overall, the people interviewed expressed concern over the quality of water and stated that they don't drink the water. Some residents and business owners expressed concern about property values since the area is listed as a Superfund site.

**Potential Health Risks Posed by the Site:** People expressed concern about the contaminated ground water and all stated that they don't drink the water. Two of the residents interviewed were concerned that their health problems were a result of contaminated ground water.

**Property Values and Economic Effects:** Property values are a concern in the neighborhood. Many feel they will not be able to sell or buy property or get loans because of the contamination and Superfund designation. The site area is industrial and residential.

**Site Area:** Because the site boundaries were so large, some wanted to know how the boundaries were selected. EPA must establish a boundary for Superfund sites and this can change throughout the remedial investigation that studies the nature and extent of pollution.

**Communication with Local Residents:** Most people interviewed want to receive information by email as well as regular mail.

#### **4.0 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM OBJECTIVES**

When establishing the objectives for a site-specific community involvement program, U.S. EPA considers several factors, including federal requirements. Considerations include:

- The nature of the site proposed cleanup plan
- The nature and extent of known or perceived site contaminants
- Known community concerns and requests

In addition, the application of new or innovative cleanup technologies and the level of technical difficulty involved with the cleanup may affect the amount and types of methods used to communicate plans and progress to the community. To be effective, the community involvement program must be designed to (1) meet the community's assumed need to know, (2) give information in a timely manner, (3) accommodate the community's interest and willingness to participate in decision-making processes, and (4) use a language(s) the public can understand.

To meet the needs of the community and to respond to information obtained during the September 2008 community interviews and meet federal requirements, the following objectives have been established for community involvement efforts at the Site:

- Enlist the support and involvement of local officials and community leaders
- Monitor citizen interest in the site and respond accordingly
- Inform the community about the planned and ongoing site activities
- Provide follow-up explanations about technical site activities and findings, including the results of sampling and risk assessment studies
- Provide opportunities for public input on key decisions
- Establish a web site for the site that will provide updates on site activities
- Provide information to the community about what agency is responsible for what activities concerning the site

## **5.0 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES**

Specific activities will be conducted to meet the objectives listed in Section 4.0 and to respond to information received during the community interviews identified in Section 3.0. Specific activities are described below.

**Maintain A Point of Contact:** EPA has established a point of contact, the community involvement coordinator (CIC), for community involvement activities at the Lusher Street Groundwater Contamination Site. The CIC serves as a liaison between the community and EPA. The current CIC is Patricia Krause, who can be reached at 312-886-9506, 800- 621-8431, ext. 69506 or [krause.patricia@epa.gov](mailto:krause.patricia@epa.gov). In addition to the CIC, a technical point of contact, the remedial project manager (RPM), has been established for the site. The RPM is Syed Quadri, who can be reached at 312-886-5736, 800- 621-8431, ext. 65736 or [quadri.syed@epa.gov](mailto:quadri.syed@epa.gov). EPA will include contact information on all written information distributed to the community and will notify the community of any contact information changes.

**Maintain Communication with Local Officials, Agencies, and Community Residents:** EPA included local officials from Elkhart, Indiana and an individual from the Health Department in the September community interviews. EPA will continue to maintain communication with local officials and agencies throughout the site cleanup activities. EPA will keep local officials informed of planned and ongoing site activities as well as significant findings during technical site activities. EPA has also established a Web page ([www.epa.gov/region5/sites/lusher](http://www.epa.gov/region5/sites/lusher)) with site-specific information and updates provided.

**Update and Maintain the Site Mailing List:** A mailing list of local residents, organizations, businesses, and officials has been established for the site. This list is used for mailing fact sheets, site updates, invitations to public meetings and events, and other site-related information to the community. As such, it will be updated regularly to reflect address changes and changes in elected officials as well as to add new residents and others interested in site activities.

**Prepare and Distribute Site-Related Information:** Fact sheets, letters, and site updates produced in target languages summarizing current information about the site and describing upcoming activities will be prepared and distributed to those on the site mailing list. Documents announcing public comment periods or other opportunities for public involvement will be distributed well in advance to give local residents sufficient time to plan participation. Timely, regular dissemination of information will also help alleviate residents' feelings of being overwhelmed by receiving large amounts of technical information. Copies of written information will also be sent to the site information repository.

**Conduct Public Meetings and Information Sessions:** Public meetings are typically held to communicate information and to solicit questions and input from the community. The purpose of the meeting should dictate the forum. For example, achievement of certain project milestones or discovery of new information may warrant a more formal public meeting with presentations of technical information by EPA personnel. On the other hand, information sessions may be needed to keep the community informed of site progress, answer resident questions about ongoing work, and obtain information about the resident perceptions and concerns. All meetings

will be advertised in a local newspaper, such as *The Elkhart Truth* or *The South Bend Tribune* at least 1 week prior to the meeting.

**Develop and Distribute News Releases:** EPA will prepare and release statements to the news media to announce significant site investigation findings, completion of major milestones, significant scheduling information, and other pertinent site-related information. News releases can be a very effective tool for quickly getting information to large numbers of people.

**Conduct a Program Evaluation:** This CIP was designed to consider site- and community-specific factors as well as to comply with federal requirements. Community concerns, the objectives of the community involvement program for the site, and specific activities to address these concerns in this CIP were based to a large extent on information obtained during interviews conducted in September 2008 with local residents and officials. EPA recognizes that changes in areas such as community perceptions, information needs, and population demographics can occur over time and that such changes may necessitate a revised approach to conducting community involvement activities to meet the current needs of the community. For this reason as well as to determine whether the activities in this plan are achieving their intended objectives, periodic reviews will be conducted to determine whether additional activities are warranted or whether changes to current methods of implementing the activities outlined in this plan are necessary.

**APPENDIX A**  
**TIMEFRAME FOR COMMUNITY INVOLEMENT ACTIVITIES**  
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### TIMEFRAME FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

Community Involvement Activities	Timeframe
1. Maintain contact with local officials and community leaders	As needed
2. Maintain contact with area residents	As needed
3. Provide site and Superfund information on the Internet	Ongoing
4. Maintain an information repository	As needed
5. Write and distribute news releases	As needed
6. Prepare and distribute fact sheets or update reports	As needed
7. Hold public meetings	As needed
8. Hold a public comment period	As needed and coinciding with the proposed plan
9. Publish notices or newspaper advertisements	As needed
10. Record a public meeting transcript	As needed and coinciding with the proposed plan
11. Prepare and issue a responsiveness summary	In response to public comment period
12. Assist in the development and activities of a community advisory group	As needed
13. Revise the community involvement plan	As needed
14. Conduct a program evaluation	As needed

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**APPENDIX B**  
**U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY**  
**CONTACTS, ELECTED OFFICIALS, LOCAL OFFICIALS,**  
**AND MEDIA CONTACTS**  
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## CONTACT INFORMATION

### A. EPA Region 5 Project Contacts

Patricia Krause 312-886-9506  
Community Involvement Coordinator [krause.patricia@epa.gov](mailto:krause.patricia@epa.gov)  
EPA  
Superfund Division (SI-7J)  
77 West Jackson Blvd.  
Chicago, IL 60604-3590

Syed Quadri 312- 886-5736  
Remedial Project Manager [quadri.syed@epa.gov](mailto:quadri.syed@epa.gov)  
EPA  
Superfund Division (SR-6J)  
77 West Jackson Blvd.  
Chicago, IL 60604-3590

### B. Federal Elected Officials

Governor Mitch Daniels 317-232-4567  
Office of the Governor  
200 W Washington St.  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Senator Evan Bayh 202-224-4653  
131 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington DC 20510

Senator Richard Lugar 202-224-4814  
306 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington DC 20510

Representative Mark Souder 202-225-4436  
2231 Rayburn Office Building  
Washington DC 20515

320 N. Chicago Avenue, Suite B 574-533-5801  
Goshen, IN 46528

Representative Joe Donnelly 202-225-3915  
1530 Longworth Office Building  
Washington DC 20515

207 W. Colfax Avenue 574-288-2780  
South Bend, IN 46601

**C. State Elected Officials**

Representative Craig Fry  
5<sup>th</sup> District

Representative Jackie Walorski  
21<sup>st</sup> District

Representative Tim Neese  
48<sup>th</sup> District

Representative Wesley Culver  
49<sup>th</sup> District

Senator Ryan Mishler  
9<sup>th</sup> District

Senator Joseph Zakas  
11<sup>th</sup> District

Senator Carlin Yoder  
12<sup>th</sup> District

200 W. Washington  
Indianapolis, IN 46506 317-232-9600

**D. Local Officials**

Mayor Dick Moore 574-294-5471

City Clerk Sue Beadle 574-522-5272

**Common Council**

1<sup>st</sup> District, Dave Osborne

2<sup>nd</sup> District, Brian Thomas

3<sup>rd</sup> District, David Henke

4<sup>th</sup> District, Ron Troyer

5<sup>th</sup> District, Brent Curry

**6<sup>th</sup> District, Tonda Hines 574-596-5524**

At-Large Councilwoman, Mary Olson

At-Large Councilman, Ralph Bean

At-Large Councilman, Rod Roberson

City Hall  
229 S. Second St.  
Elkhart, IN 46516

**E. State and Local Agencies**

City of Elkhart 574-293-2572  
Public Works  
Mike Machlan  
1201 Nappanee St.  
Elkhart, IN

Elkhart County Health Department  
4230 Elkhart Road  
Goshen, IN 46526

John Hulewicz 574-875-3391

Indiana Department of Environmental 317-234-0352  
Management  
Office of Land Quality/Remediation Services Branch  
Prabhakar Kasarabada  
100 North Senate Avenue  
Room IGCN 1101  
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2251

**F. Newspapers**

*The Elkhart Truth* 574-522-5252  
103 South 3<sup>rd</sup> Street  
Goshen, IN 46526

*The South Bend Tribune* 574-235-6161  
225 W. Colfax Ave.  
South Bend, IN 46626

**G. Radio Stations**

WTRC 574-237-9931  
4747 W. Washington Street  
South Bend, IN 46619

WLEG 574-389-5100  
421 S. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street  
Elkhart, IN 46516

WFRN	574-875-5166
25802 County Road 26	
Elkhart, IN 46517	

WVPE (NPR)	574-674-9873
2720 California Road	
Elkhart, IN 46514	

**H. Television Stations**

WSJV-TV (Fox), Channel 28	574-679-9758
58096 County Road 7	
\ Elkhart, IN 46517	

WNIT-TV (PBS)	574-262-3434
2424 California Road	
Elkhart, IN 46514	

WNDU-TV Channel 16	574-631-1616
54516 Indiana State Route	
South Bend, IN 46637	

WBND-TV ABC 57	574-243-4316
3665 Park Place West	
Mishawaka, IN 46545	



**APPENDIX C**  
**INFORMATION REPOSITORY**  
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## **INFORMATION REPOSITORY**

Elkhart Public Library  
Reference Services  
300 S. Second Street  
Elkhart, IN

EPA Web page:

[www.epa.gov/region5/sites/lusher](http://www.epa.gov/region5/sites/lusher)